

THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTOR.

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BIOGRAPHY.

Memoir of Mr. Francis Blackwell.

Mr. Francis Blackwell, the subject of this memoir, was born at Blackwell-heath, in the parish of High-Wycombe, Bucks. He was the youngest of four sons of William and Mary Blackwell, and brought up to the paper manufactory, by which he maintained his family with decency and credit. At one time, however, he was greatly exercised in his worldly affairs, but was relieved in a manner remarkably providential; and, in the latter part of his life, enjoyed a sufficiency, not only for support, but to gratify his hospitable disposition to his friends.* Mr. B. occupied a mill at Loud-water, near High Wycombe, now in the use of Mr. William Briant, his grandson, whom he particularly notices in his dying testimony. His late wife was a woman of very singular piety.†

His first serious impressions were occasioned by a violent fever about fifty years ago, which was sanctified as the mean of bringing him into the kingdom of grace; and by a like affliction, which he caught in his kind attention on the

* See a letter from the Rev. Mr. Cooke, of Maidenhead, to the Rev. T. English, inserted in his funeral sermon for Mr. B. page 22, note.

† See her funeral sermon, preached also by Mr. English.

sick, he had his entrance into the realms of glory and immortality.

The manner of his introduction to the ministry is not out of recollection. Three or four good men were in the habit of repeating in the evening, the substance of the sermons they had heard in the course of the sabbath day at church, with a view to their own edification, and that of others, who were inclined to associate with them. Mr. Blackwell was one of these, and he also sometimes delivered his own reflections, which being approved, he was encouraged to speak in private houses, as opportunity offered. Thus this little conference in the parish of Wooburn, was the means of producing and keeping alive the spark of religion in those parts, which for the last thirty years has been increasing, till it is become a very considerable flame. The expulsion of the six students from Oxford in 1768, for prayer and preaching, &c. contributed to give an establishment to the gospel. The Rev. T. Grove, being of that number, converted one of his barns into a chapel in this place. Mr. B. greatly assisted him: and, on Mr. G's removal, for the last eighteen years of his life, he most freely and affectionately continued his disinterested labours on all occasions, to serve the same church under the care of Mr. English, their present pastor. Mr. B. had not human advantages to fit him for the ministry, yet, was he admirably qualified for what the Lord intended to do by him. One observes, who well knew him, and was attentive to the work of the Lord done by him at Wooburn and in the surrounding neighbourhood: "He entered on his ministry at a very dark *time*, and in a very dark *place*." He addressed those who could understand him better than if he had been a learned man: however, in the most important sense he had "the tongue of the learned, and could "speak a word in season." His humility would not let him rush into places where men of considerable ministerial talents laboured; nor would he go, but when necessity called him.

He was also a *most eminent Christian*, and richly anointed with the Holy Ghost. There was a savour attending his conversations, his prayers, and his sermons, which gave him a distinguished superiority to many ministers of greater gifts. The broad seal of heaven was affixed to his preaching; he was more useful than many—than most in the surrounding country. *The hand of the Lord* was with him, and many believed and turned to the Lord. At that time, men from whom nothing was expected, were the instruments which

God patronized. Mr. B. was blessed with a happy and well-grounded assurance of his interest in Christ; which made him, generally speaking, comfortable and even happy. Yet was he no stranger to the suggestions of the great adversary of souls, even in his last hours. Repeatedly has he been overheard to say—"Begone—begone—you have nothing to do with *me*! You *know* you have nothing to do with me. I hate sin—I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; get you gone—yours are lies." Thus was he enabled to resist Satan, and he fled from him. Holiness was his element—in it he lived, breathed, and had his whole delight. Thus was his happy spirit prepared for glory; a subject which very suitably closed his ministerial labours.

This excellent man was indeed a cheerful christian, and all his conduct evinced his firm conviction that

"Religion never was design'd
To make our pleasures less:"

But, on the contrary, to animate, refine, and exalt them.—He was, nevertheless, frequently clothed in sackcloth; he greatly lamented his own depravity, and was deeply grieved for that of others. The wickedness of those around him often pierced his heart: he sighed and cried for the iniquities of the land; and particularly mourned to witness the unsanctified tempers and conduct of professors. He was eminent for personal religion. *His* was vital, pure, unaffected and exalted piety. Such was his inoffensive life, that with great truth and propriety we may adopt the expression of a poor man concerning him, as his corpse was carried to the grave—"There is a man in whose coat a moth-hole is not to be found."

He had, in the best things, a sound judgment, and would not countenance such as did not most highly honour his divine Master. He possessed a devoted heart, and abounded much in prayer. No minister visited him without accompanying him to the throne of grace; an example highly worthy the imitation of both ministers and private christians. He was also favoured with much private communion with his God and Saviour. The writer of this memoir had observed his mind to be remarkably abstracted from the world for sometime previously to his death; and a kind of instantaneous involuntary prayer seemed frequently unconsciously to escape his lips. His life was most exemplary; he walked by the rules of his divine Master, and even the world will testify that he was "an epistle of Christ, known and read of all

men," and with general approbation. His holy life recommended his religion, and gave a true dignity to his character. As a minister of Christ, he was highly honoured. He had a truly missionary spirit, an apostolic mind. Forty years with unwearied diligence he preached the gospel in his neighbourhood. He used to call himself a *stop-gap*—he repaired and kept up the fences of the neighbouring churches to an extent of many miles. He scattered the good seed every where around; in public by his ministry, in private by his friendly visits, and in his kind and ready attention to the sick and afflicted; these were profited by his faithful counsels and his fervent prayers; nor did he only say, where pecuniary supply was needful, "Be ye warmed and be ye clothed:" for the bowels of his compassion were never shut—his charities were excessive—the canker did not corrode his gold. It was his great concern to do good in his life; nor had he "a single wish," to use his own words, "for the continuance of it, but to be more useful, and advance more the glory of Jesus Christ."

His ministry was simple and unaffected. He aimed to do good, and forget himself. He only wished to recommend his Master. His preaching was powerful, penetrating, and energetic. It was indeed evident that he was not possessed of human learning; yet he knew his spiritual alphabet, from the alpha to the omega, from the beginning to the end; could construe, with accuracy, this pure language—was well read in the prophets and apostles, and had a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. Although he had no acquaintance with literature, and was a stranger to rhetorical flourishes, or well-turned periods; he was possessed of a talent far superior * His sharp pointed arrows, directed by a divine hand, entered the conscience and fixed there; nor were they extracted till the balm of Gilead was applied; till the virtues of the leaves of the tree of life were proved, which are *for the healing of the nations*. He frequently used to say, "that he drew the bow at a venture—that the Lord had the direction of the arrow—that he knew not the cases of the people—that he must live with them to know them." He entered not into the field with Saut's polished, but unconsecrat-

* *The writer of this memoir is no enemy to learning; he conceives highly of erudition, and values learned men; but in the ministry of the gospel it is not always necessary; and, in comparison of divine influence and power, it is nothing, yea, less than nothing and vanity; this is daily demonstrated.*

ed armour ; but, like *David, with a sling and a stone from his shepherd's bag*, he prevailed over the Philistine. *Goliath* fell before him and our Israel shouted ! He used to say, " I am no silver trumpet : I am an unpolished ram's horn." But his sound was certain, powerful, and effective ; before it the strong walls of Jericho fell. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.** Persons destitute of spiritual taste, and who had no relish for the gospel in its simplicity, had their objections, and many refused the bread, because, as he used to say, " it was *brown bread*, not served up in a silver dish." But the Lord put honour on his ministry, and made him instrumental of great good to his fellow-sinners.

In him was an assemblage of christian excellencies. He was a lovely example for ministers both in his spirit and diligence. He laboured even to weariness ; but frequently would with cheerfulness say, " It is better to wear out than to rust out." He was truly disinterested ; he preached the gospel freely ; and felt the truth of that declaration, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*. He was generous and open hearted—like a true bishop, *given to hospitality*. He was remarkably affectionate to his young friends, and greatly desirous of their salvation. His worth in his relative capacities, as *father, master, neighbour, and friend*, the general course of his conduct has amply proved ; and the circumstances of his death have established it so long as his memory shall live.

The venerable man honoured the Lord in his life, and was greatly favoured by him in his death. Then, like the Patriarch Jacob, he collected his family and friends around his bed, and gave to each his blessing, and his prayers. To a grand-daughter about twenty-three years of age,† he said, " You have a praying grandfather, who has put up thousands of petitions for you ; but on these you must not depend ; you must pray for yourself—read the word of God, attend the means of grace, renounce the world, and take care what company you keep ; the Lord bless you !"

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

† Since his death, this young person has joined the church at Wooburn, confessing that his dying words had a great effect upon her mind.

To the reverend Mr. Sleaf he said, "The Lord bless you in your body and soul! The Lord bless you as a minister, and make you faithful and successful! The Lord bless your child!"

To dear Mrs. Blackwell's niece, "The Lord bless you! The Lord bless your husband! The Lord bless your children! May you live holy and die happy!"

To his housekeeper, "The Lord bless you! You have been a kind and faithful friend to me, and the Lord will take care of you. We have often prayed together, you know. You may still retire to your closet—do not grieve—The Lord bless you!"

To a daughter—"I am now going to do as good old Jacob did, to bless you all, my children, and then draw up my feet and die. I will bless you all. I have put up thousands of prayers for you. See you do not live without prayer; be sure to read the word of God; neglect not the means of grace; keep the sabbath holy. I have been a living, and now am a dying witness to the reality of religion—See now, I am not afraid to die. God bless you!"

To his other daughter—"See, here, a dying father—I never forgot my children, though they were not with me; it is now fifty years since I began to pray. Hear you the gospel—pray—read the word—keep the sabbath—but after all, remember, you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—if ever you are saved: and tell your husband what a dying father says. May the Lord bless you all!"

To another person he said, "It is an awful thing to be the instrument of bringing children into the world, and to be careless about their souls. Your conscience witnesses to the truth of what I say. O read, pray, and hear the gospel. Do not spend your time in public houses and in trifling. The Lord bless you! You have not been careful of those about you, as you should have been. Go to Jesus to be saved as a sinner. Do not be angry with me. You know I must be faithful. The Lord bless you!—You see I am not afraid to die."

Stretching out his dying hand to receive his grandson, he bid him not grieve, and said, "I have *preached* Christ, now I am going to *enjoy* him. I think I shall be in heaven before morning—My next sabbath will be spent there. I am lingering on the brink. I am now going to be taken from you. This has been, for many years, a *praying family*, I could wish it so to *continue* when I am gone. You and — (an old servant) keep up family prayer. It will be your

honour. A few words from the heart—be not discouraged. Mind not the ridicule of the world—attend all duties—bear your testimony against sin in the mill—love good men from good principles—use them kindly when they call upon you, as I have done. The Lord bless you, and be with you, through life, death, and to eternity! This is my prayer for you, I can say no more.”*

To a little girl, about twelve years old, he said, “Come, my little dear, I will give you a double portion—Benjamin’s mess, the Lord bless you!”

To a grand daughter, about eleven years old, “Remember your dying grandfather. Be sure you be a good child, and pray—and remember you must be saved by Jesus Christ, if ever you be saved.”

When his servants, who worked in his mill, entered his room, to the first he said, “You are morally sober, honest, and industrious; but that is not religion. I have prayed for you, but you must pray for yourself—you must go to Jesus Christ; you must be pardoned through his blood; justified through his righteousness; and sanctified and made meet for heaven. I trust I have prayed and served God for fifty years, and now I am glad to be saved as a poor sinner. The Lord bless you!”

To another servant, whom he addressed in a singular way, he said, “Live in peace with your family, with your wife and children, nor fall out, nor be contentious. The Lord bless you!”

To two grandsons he spake, “Come, my boys, let me bless you. Be sure you be good boys. Let not the wicked world ensnare you. When your wicked companions invite you, don’t consent to them. Read your bibles, pray to God; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot be saved without Jesus Christ. The Lord bless you!”†

To another of his servants—“what do you think about dying? Did you ever think where you were going to? You know there are but two places, heaven and hell. When I am gone, be faithful, don’t deceive; be honest and upright. The Lord bless you!”

** This person occupies the same mill; is a member of the church at Wooburn, and appears to be fast following the footsteps of his grand-father.*

† Since the above time, one of these has also joined the church at Wooburn.

To another servant—"Look on your dying master; if you was where I am, and to die to night, you would surely go to hell; and if I die to night, I shall surely go to heaven. Your conscience tells you, you do not read the word of God, you break the sabbath, you do not pray in your family." "Yes, master," said the man, "I do." "Ah! when?" "Every night," said he. "And what do you say?" "O," said he, "I do as well as I can." "You live in sin." "Yes, master, I do." "Then," said the good old man, "thy prayers are an abomination to the Lord. You do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you must be changed. The Lord bless you!"

He then spake to four little boys, whom he addressed in a very affectionate manner, according to their ages, and blessed them.

He addressed the next, who was an old servant in a different manner from all the rest, "You fear God, you read and pray; you believe in Christ; you love, serve, and honour him; you will soon be with him in glory. I charge you to pray in this family when I am gone. The Lord bless you!"

To his maid servant—"What have you thought since I have been ill? Did you ever pray in sincerity; have you any knowledge of Jesus Christ, of salvation by him? Did you ever see the danger there is in sin? Pray without ceasing. The Lord bless you, and be with you through life, and death, and bring you to everlasting glory!"

"I did not preach last Lord's day, but the Lord has made it up to-day. Samson slew more at his death than through his whole life. The Lord grant it may be so to-day! Sometimes the Lord blesses the words of dying men." When he saw those about him in tears, he added, "This is the seed time; those who sow in tears, shall reap in joy; and, I trust, it is a healing time also, yea, it is a glorious time. These are my last legacies."

On Mr. E. coming from town to see him, on Thursday evening, he expressed his concern at his being returned from the missionary opportunities, discovered a sympathy at his fatigue in journeying, and told him he had been preaching to his work people. "About Thursday," he added, "you will bury me; you will then preach at Wycombe and at Wooburn on the sabbath; O my Wooburn friends!" an exclamation of heart-felt esteem for them; for whom he had laboured much and often. He went on, "Let six ministers hold up

my pall; say nothing about me." Mr. E. said, "not particularly about you, but what the grace of God hath done *for you, in you, and by you.*" He saw the distinction, and expressed his satisfaction. Speaking of Mrs. Blackwell, he said, "I shall soon see her. What a meeting will it be! What do you think she will say to me? but we do not understand the language of heaven now." It was replied, she would welcome him there. Mr. E. said, "Let me have an interest in your kind wishes." He said, "You shall have my dying prayer." And, after a solemn pause, he said, "The Lord bless you in your ministry, in your soul, in your body, in your family, in all you have, and in all you are. The Lord bless you." In a short prayer he was then committed to that God who redeemed him from all evil, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen, and amen. The next morning Mr. E. saw him again; he requested him to pray that he might be dismissed, and expressed his assurance that he was on the rock, and wished to be gone. Taking a little nourishment, he said, "This is better than Christ had; they gave him vinegar and gall; this is better than I deserve." After taking a little wine—"May I want no more, till I drink it anew in my Father's kingdom!" On mentioning his kind friends, Mr. Wildman's family, he paused and prayed, that God would give them *prudence, patience, and glory.* On the Friday he rather revived, but the restlessness of death was on him all through the day; and about twelve at night he was heard to say, a little before his departure—"Cut it—cut it short—cut it ~~in~~ the middle."—The thread of life was soon cut, and he winged his way to mansions of eternal light and glory; where the *sun goeth no more down, nor the moon withdraws herself—where the Lord is his everlasting light, and the days of his mourning are ended.*

These words were the text which was improved by Mr. E. in a funeral sermon at Wycombe immediately after the interment; and at Wooburn the sabbath following, May 22, 1796, in which are some other interesting circumstances which could not be comprized in the present memoir.

(*Evang. Mag.*)

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.

ON FAMILY RELIGION.

In the third number of this magazine, a few arguments and motives were briefly stated, to excite the heads of families to pay a punctual and conscientious regard to all those solemn and important duties, which are comprised under the name of *Family Religion*. As this work, which presents variety, to suit the different tastes and circumstances of the readers, will not admit of long treatises on any particular subject, what are now offered are a few additional observations on the duties above recommended.

What we comprehend under the general name of family religion, is, prayer, the singing of psalms or hymns, expressive of gratitude and veneration, and reading the scriptures, or portions of pious and practical writers, founded on the word of God. To this may be added the catechising of children and servants, religious conversation, exhortations, reproofs, and admonitions, as the case may from time to time require.

And one would think, that among a people enlightened by the beams of revelation and professing christianity, it would be next to superfluous, to advance many arguments to shew the necessity and importance of the exercises mentioned, or to point out the many advantages, both to families and individuals, thence resulting. Is it not admitted by all, that social worship, and particularly united praise to God, has a happy tendency to enliven devotion? Why do we find temples, churches, or places appropriated to the worship of superior beings, among all nations under the sun, or with very few exceptions, if even the voice of nature did not dictate the propriety and advantages of united prayer and praise?

And in what society can the exercises of religion be more properly or profitably attended to than in a family, the several members of which are united by the most endearing ties, and required by the Father of all to cherish every kind affection, and to promote as far as possible each other's happiness? While the several constituent parts of a family are thus daily reminded of their respective duties, and engaged in earnest requests to the throne of grace for wisdom and grace for every time of need, will not those duties be more attended to, and more cheerfully

and conscientiously discharged, than could otherwise be expected? How often are families visited with sickness and other calamities? From year to year, one and another are removed from time to eternity, and others are left to lament their loss. Sometimes one of those to whom the care of the family was committed is taken away, either by some sudden stroke or some painful and lingering illness. Sometimes the infant is snatched from the breast of a fond mother,—or the young man and the young woman, who promised to be the staff and comfort of their parents in their declining years, sicken and die! And how are youth to be prepared for the solemn event, if not taught to remember their Creator in the days of their youth? How are parents or children to be supported under their losses, and enabled to bear these strokes with christian patience, if they have no religion?

Let it not be said, they may have religion, and religion enough for every trial and for every duty, by having regard individually to the duties of the closet, though they never join in any acts of social worship. We hope, indeed, that there may be much religion in families, even in the case supposed. Children may be led to attend to the devotions of the closet, morning and evening, and may be much engaged in praying for themselves and their parents, even while these are living from day to day in the neglect of their duty.

But let it be remembered, that every thing is beautiful in its own time and place,—and that secret and social worship come greatly in aid of each other, and are both necessary to the flourishing state of religion in the families of God's professing people.

It is feared that some heads of families live in the neglect of their duty, because they do not allow themselves to be thoroughly convinced that it is their duty. They endeavour to satisfy their minds with believing that family religion is not clearly and positively commanded; and that it is in some measure optional with them whether they attend to it or not.

Let the scriptures be searched diligently, and those passages carefully weighed which are commonly referred to, by writers on this subject, and it will be strange indeed, if to a mind truly desirous to know and profit by the word of God, this does not appear to be a duty required and strictly enjoined. What is meant by all manner of prayer and supplication, if social prayer of the kind under consideration, be not included? What can the divine threatenings against

the neglect of a practice mean, if that practice be not a commanded duty? What are we to learn from the practice of holy men of old, and the commendation bestowed upon them for that practice, if it were not something pleasing to God and a commanded duty? It is said of Abraham, I know him, that he will command his children, &c. and Joshua's resolution was, that whatever the people might do, as for him and his house they would serve the Lord. Let us attend to the example set before us by the Saviour; He prayed with his disciples, which may be considered as a family of which he was the head; and the disciples manifestly imitated his example.

We find that in all ages and branches of the christian church, family religion has been considered as a duty of primary importance; and we never read of religion being in a flourishing state in any part of the world, but we read at the same time of family worship being zealously practised.

We will suppose for a moment, that there were no commands in the word of God for the practice under consideration, but only general precepts with respect to prayer, or assurances that God is the hearer of prayer, and that he allows us to come before him as often as we choose to ask his grace and blessing; even upon this supposition, it may be argued, that if we truly love God, and prize his blessing above all things, and earnestly desire that the peace, harmony and happiness of our families should be promoted; we will embrace every proper occasion of presenting, together with those most dear to us, our fervent prayers to God. How often have we heard fathers, when lying on a death bed, lament with bitterness, that they had neglected to pray with their children! That they had neglected to set them that example which they owed their pious parents had set before them, in the days of their youth!—How affecting to hear a parent, in such circumstances, calling his dear children around him, and thus addressing them; “My children, I am about soon to leave you forever—and before I go I feel myself constrained to give you a solemn advice. You know that I seldom, if ever, called you together, not even on the Sabbath, to give you religious instructions, to pray with you, or to teach you to pray. Yet when I had you baptized, I promised to attend to your religious education. I have been industrious in providing for your comfortable settlement in this world, which was indeed in a certain measure my duty, but I have taken little pains to have you prepared for another

world, and for that solemn hour at which I myself am now arrived. I am constrained to make these acknowledgments and I do it for your warning. I charge you, follow not my example in this respect. O! with how much more peace could I die, were I conscious that I had done my duty to each of you! Hear a dying father's request; when you have families of your own, set up the worship of God without delay in those families, however few the number may be, and daily call down the blessings of heaven upon yourselves and your children. Pray that your worldly affairs may be prospered, and that your riches may not prove a curse and a snare to you: but above all pray for the riches which come from above, pray for all that preparation that is necessary, that you may look death in the face without terror, and look into an opening eternity with joyous hope."

And how affecting to hear a child on a dying bed, awakened to great concern about the salvation of his soul, thus addressing an ungodly parent: "O my father, I find now that I have a soul, that must enter through the doors of death into eternity,—and it may be in a few hours! I shall see you no more, I shall hear you no more. Why did you not speak more to me about my soul, when you might have done it, and I could have attended to your advice and instructions! Why did you not teach me to pray! I have often seen you made unfit for any duty, even respecting your worldly affairs, by immoderate drinking. I have heard many wicked and base words falling from your lips: I have often heard you curse and swear, but never heard you pray. Sooner than you imagined, I watched your actions and your words. And if I perish forever, will not much of the sin lie at your door?"

It would be easy to reverse the scene, and to imagine to ourselves what must be the delightful expressions which parents and children employ, in addressing each other, in the circumstances supposed: parents and children, who have loved one another, and manifested their affection by daily prayers for each other at the throne of grace; and who have frequently joined together in praising God for family as well as individual deliverances and blessings.

Do any complain, that more than is necessary is said to them on this subject; that they are urged too much to the duties of family religion? Let these remember, that such complaints would furnish strong evidence, that they are as yet unacquainted with true religion,—that they are yet strangers to the love of God and heavenly things, and that

sweet communion with God, in which saints so greatly delight.

It is indeed a burden to those who have no love to the Saviour and to divine and spiritual things, to attend to preaching, praying, or any other religious duty. But it would be a strange thing, if any who truly love God, and prize his blessing above all things, should be heard to complain, that Christ's yoke is heavy, that his service is burdensome ; that they wish to be excused from having frequent converse with him, and that instead of daily prayer to God, they would be pleased, if they were only called to this wearisome exercise once or twice a week, or only required to do so much in religion as might assure them they would go to heaven, and nothing more. No christian, when in the exercise of faith and love, and deeply sensible of his need of divine communications, will account that a task or a burden, which he views as among his most precious privileges.

P.

(FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.)

Thoughts on Christ's Ascension.

John i. 51. *And he said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

These words contain a promise which Jesus made to Nathanael, (which some think to be the same as Bartholomew) and to some other disciples whom he had chosen : and it may be of use to determine as well as we can from the sacred history, the time of the fulfilment of this prophecy and promise.

In the preceding part of this chapter we have a brief account of the calling of the first of Christ's disciples, and of their being persuaded that he was the Messiah, that is, the Christ, of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write ; see v. 41, and 45.

John the Baptist bare testimony to Christ, saying, ' Behold the Lamb of God ! ' and this John was he who was promised to come before Christ, in the Spirit and power of Elias, i. e. Elijah, and to prepare his way before him. Some who heard John, and to whom no doubt he made known the discoveries that had been made to him of Christ's

true character, immediately became Christ's followers; called *disciples*, because they were to be *instructed* by this great Master, in the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven.

Those who first came to the knowledge of Jesus, as *the Christ*, were made instrumental in bringing others to him. Jesus found Philip, and said unto him "Follow me." Philip findeth Nathanael, and said unto him, "We have found him, &c." v. 45. And he immediately replied, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip saith unto him, 'Come and see.' No doubt expecting that Jesus would give him some proof that he was indeed the person so long expected by the Jewish nation.

Then as Nathanael was coming towards Jesus, and was yet at some distance, yet so that he could hear what he said of him; Jesus said, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, &c.' This struck Nathanael with surprize, that Jesus, to whom he supposed himself as yet unknown, should thus delineate his character: and from the favourable words of Christ respecting him, he takes courage to ask him, how he came by this knowledge? as in v. 48. Jesus replies, v. 48 'Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.'

It is highly probable, that this good man had been in some retired place, deeply musing upon the prophecies concerning the expected Messiah; he might have heard a report of what had happened at Jordan, when Jesus was baptized; and might at this time have been engaged in earnest prayer to God, to enlighten his mind; and, if this person whose fame began to spread abroad was indeed the Christ, to reveal it fully to him.

When therefore Jesus, in answer to his question, how he knew him, informed him that he was able to tell him how he was exercised and employed in a place where he had thought no human eye could see him, and where he was well assured Jesus could not, unless he were omniscient, or a prophet; this observation was made a mean of carrying home conviction to his mind, and he exclaims, 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.' This shows that these titles were familiar to the Jews, as applicable to the Messiah.

These high characters Jesus knew did indeed belong to him, and his allowing himself to be thus addressed, is the same as if he had himself declared, 'I am the Son of God, I am the king of Israel.'

But although the Saviour approved of this confession which this man made of his faith in him, as well founded, he also knew, that many other proofs yet remained to be given of his being the Son of God; and that the disciples chosen, and those who were yet to be chosen, should see and know much greater things than they had yet witnessed: by means of which their faith would be most fully confirmed.

And thus we see how the words under consideration were introduced, v. 51.

In Christ's reply, we see that he stiles himself, as he does on many occasions, *the Son of man*, and he allowed himself at the same time to be called, *the Son of God*; so that here, as in many other places, his two natures are clearly taught. He stiles himself, *the Son of man*, because he had been spoken of under this character by a prophet, and because this character peculiarly suited the state of his humiliation.

The '*greater things than these*,' which the disciples were to see afterwards, no doubt mean his miracles in general which they witnessed, and the wonderful things which happened at his death, his resurrection, and his ascension. To this last, namely his *ascension*, the words under consideration seem especially to relate. They might indeed respect, in a large sense, the whole of his public ministry; for angels no doubt waited on him, during the whole of that time. But as they were for the most part invisible; it seems best to understand these words, as relating to the *ascension*, when angels were visible and spake to the disciples; and when, in a sublime sense indeed, the heaven was opened, to receive the ascending Saviour, surrounded by myriads of applauding angels.

These words may also be very properly considered, as having a respect to the glorious appearance which Jesus will make at the last day, when, as he says himself, he shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him.

The word *upon* seems to mean the same as *with* or *around*.

It is proper here to enquire into the reason of the manner of expression in this text. For if he had intended merely to express, that angels should be his ministering attendants: and that they, his disciples, should, at the proper time, have this made manifest even to their bodily eyes; it is probable that he would have expressed himself in what we would call plainer language. This leads us, then

to think, that besides declaring what is above said, he intended to call their attention to some remarkable expression relating to himself in the Old Testament; and to some prophetic vision, the full meaning and application of which they would thus be led to understand. This leads us, therefore, to examine the sacred records, to see whether language such as this is any where to be found in the Hebrew scriptures, and found where it would appear that some memorable revelation of things, pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, was made to some of the highly favoured patriarchs or prophets of old time.

Some think that these words of Christ, especially as he styles himself *the Son of man*, may particularly refer to that prophecy and vision which we meet with in the seventh chapter of Daniel.

But although this is undoubtedly an illustrious prophecy of Christ, and of the spreading of his kingdom and gospel, in spite of all *the beasts*, that is, those *earthly powers* and kingdoms, who set themselves against the Lord and his annointed; yet, as the remarkable expression of 'ascending and descending upon the Son of man,' is not here used; we are led to seek some other passage of the Old Testament to which Christ's words will more easily and exactly apply.

Gen. xxviii. 10, &c. "And Jacob went out from Beersheba and went towards Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold! the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac.

16 v. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the LORD is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God: and this is the gate of heaven.

"And Jacob called the name of that place Beth-el, which is, being interpreted, The house of God."

As the words of Christ and those used in Jacob's vision are so very similar, and the same form of expression is nowhere else to be found in the sacred writings; and as these good men to whom Christ is here speaking were undoubtedly

well acquainted with every thing recorded in the history of the founders of their nation, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; we think we may safely conclude, that our Lord here points to that ancient and very remarkable prophetic vision, and teaches that its accomplishment would be in himself.

He stiles himself *the way* to the Father. This ladder, whose top reached to heaven, &c. is very beautifully expressive of Christ as mediator, by whom heaven and earth were to be as it were *united*, or a communication was to be formed between them: and we are here taught that in consequence of Christ's death, atonement, ascension and intercession, gifts purchased for, would be bestowed upon men, and angels would be sent forth to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.

The glorious appearance at the top of the ladder, from which a voice appeared to come forth, (which was, we may think, a glory like the *Shekinah*, so often mentioned, as appearing in old time) represented or indicated the presence of the deity, in the person of God the Father. So we find when Christ was transfigured on the mount, a glorious appearance was seen, and a voice proceeded from the bright cloud, 'This is my beloved Son, &c.'

When we carefully read the history of our Lord, we find mention made of angels appearing at several times. But as the appearance which these disciples present were to witness, and which was intended to be a principal mean of confirming their faith in him as the Messiah, so that after that not even the shadow of a doubt should remain, was to be something which they all should see with their own eyes, and not have as a report from others; we are constrained to look to his glorious ascension to heaven, as the great and important event here indicated, and which was before long to come to pass. Then no doubt a multitude of angels attended on Jesus; and some even suppose that the bright appearance in the air, when he was carried up, might have been that occasioned by the refulgent glories of this heavenly host, and which was as a bright cloud that received him. That there were angels present on this solemn occasion is declared by the Evangelist Luke, in the first chapter of the book called *The Acts of the Apostles*, which is to be considered as a continuation of Luke's gospel; read 1 ch. v. 9, 10, 11.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.

Matt. xi. 11. *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

Commentators have generally considered this text as containing a comparison, between John the Baptist and the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. They suppose that our Saviour here declared that the least of his disciples was superior to John. This interpretation appears to me to be incredible, for the following reasons.

1. It requires the language of the text to be changed, from the present to the future. Our Lord says, "the least in the kingdom of heaven *is* greater than he;" but commentators explain it, as if the expression were, "the least *shall* be greater than he." Accordingly a celebrated translator has rendered the passage in this manner, without alleging a different reading, or any kind of authority, for the alteration of the text: and others, though they have retained the *is*, in the text, have generally introduced the *shall be* into the interpretation. And this alteration of the tenses seems to be absolutely requisite, according to the explanation which they have given; because the disciples of Jesus Christ had not yet received those special instructions and miraculous powers, which are supposed to have rendered them superior to John the Baptist.

2. Another objection of greater importance, is, that this interpretation is incredible in itself and inconsistent with several other passages of holy writ. I am unable to perceive how it could be truly affirmed, that the weakest believer under the gospel dispensation, is greater than such an extraordinary and illustrious character as John the Baptist. The comparison cannot be reasonably confined to the twelve apostles—it extends, on the one hand, to "all them that are born of women"—and on the other, to all the inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven, or to every member of the church of Christ. Neither can the superiority which is here spoken of, consist, in our being favoured with clearer light, concerning the obedience and sufferings, the grace and glory, of Jesus Christ, and the spiritual nature and design of his kingdom. Knowledge is not merit. Whatever we may

sometimes fancy, extraordinary privileges are never represented in the word of God, as constituting true greatness. But John certainly possessed a considerable fund of religious knowledge "He was a burning and shining light." In the history of his life, which is extremely brief, we are informed, that he bare testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ—his propitiatory death—his mediatorial fulness—the necessity of believing in him and repenting of our sins—and the reward of eternal life through his obedience unto death. He also bare testimony to the divinity of the Holy Ghost and his character and agency in the salvation of sinners. But his greatness in a special manner consisted in his official character, as the angel of Jehovah's presence, who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, and in his moral and religious attainments. In these respects he was not inferior to any of the sons of men who had lived before him. Now the person who is said to be "greater than he" must surpass him in the same respects in which he surpassed all his predecessors—must be invested with a higher office, and be a more holy, humble, faithful and intrepid servant of God. Can this be truly affirmed of the weakest believer under the gospel dispensation? On the contrary, the character of the Baptist will not greatly suffer from a comparison with the character of the apostle Paul.

3. The common interpretation appears to me to have a pernicious tendency. It leads us to "think of ourselves above what we ought to think;" and to degrade the Old Testament saints, below that station to which they are exalted in the word of God. The weakest and most imperfect believer in Christ being superior to John, who excelled all his predecessors, must be greatly superior to all the ancient patriarchs and prophets. You, my christian reader, whoever you may be, however weak in faith, languid in zeal and imperfect in holiness, you (if this interpretation be just) are much greater than Abraham, and Joseph, and Moses, and Job, and Samuel, and David and Daniel. I know your conscience will reply "God forbid that I should entertain such an opinion." Instead of looking down upon these ancient worthies, you are accustomed, to consider them as superiors and to venerate them as patterns. Such was the opinion of the apostle James when he said, "Take my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example." And such was the opinion of the apostle Paul, when, next to the author and finisher of our faith, he exhorted us to imitate that "cloud of witnesses" who had gone before us. Now where is the chris

tian, who will presume to exalt himself above those illustrious characters which are proposed by these two eminent apostles, as patterns for our imitation? Where is the minister, who can pretend to be more diligent and faithful, than one who excelled them all? Where can you discover, such integrity and zeal, as he manifested in addressing the hypocritical Jews, and in reproving the incestuous connexion of Herod and Herodias? Can the shrill murmur of the oaten pipe, be compared, to the loud roar of the clarion or trumpet? With as much propriety may the instructions of ordinary ministers be compared to the voice of him who cried in the wilderness—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

What then is the meaning of this expression, "the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he?" The meaning of the text, I apprehend, is, that Jesus Christ himself was superior to John. For the illustration and proof of this the following remarks solicit your attention:

The text I apprehend is incorrectly translated. The word which is rendered *least* [*microteros*] is evidently the comparative, and not the superlative of the word [*micros*] *little*; and hence according to grammatical propriety, the passage ought to be translated "he that is *less* in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The application of words, in some instances, may vary from grammar rules; and when this is the case, the meaning of them must be ascertained from common use. If the word which is here rendered *least*, were always used, in the New Testament, in such a connexion, as to render that translation necessary, this uniform application of the term would be sufficient to decide the meaning of it here. But such is not the fact. In the gospel by Mark iv. 31. the same word is translated *less*. "The grain of mustard seed is *less* than all the seeds that be in the earth." In the corresponding passage by Matt. xiii. 32. it is rendered the *least* of all seeds; but there the same comparison is evidently used, and the word might with propriety be translated in the same manner as in the gospel by Mark. There is one passage where the word *microteros*, cannot be conveniently translated into English, so as to preserve the comparative form of expression; but this must be owing to the difficulty of giving a literal translation; for even there, a comparison among the disciples is evidently intended. "He that is *least* among you all, the same shall be great." Luke ix. 48. I cannot recollect any passage in the New Testament where

this word properly includes the superlative degree; and I think it was certainly wrong for translators to render it so here.

Now if the text ought to be translated, "he that is *less* in the kingdom (or reign) of heaven is greater than he"; let us next enquire what we are to understand by the word *less*. I apprehend it means younger. In several places of the New Testament, the word *little*, [micros,] signifies young. To be convinced of this, the reader need only examine the eighteenth chapter of the gospel by Matt. where he will find that, *little child*, in the second and fifth verses, and *little ones*, in the sixth, are used as synonymous expressions.—Now if the word *little* sometimes signifies *young*, it is reasonable to infer that the word *less* may sometimes signify *younger*.

But we can produce stronger evidence, than [that which arises from analogy. In Rom. ix. 12. it is said, "the elder shall serve the* younger" In the original it is, the "greater shall serve the less," and is so rendered in the margin. Here the words *greater* and *less*, undoubtedly signify elder and younger, and are justly rendered so by our translators.

Now Jesus Christ was younger than John the Baptist and later in assuming his public ministry; but though younger he was unspeakably greater than John. And hence the Baptist declared, "he that cometh after me is preferred before me." He acknowledged that Jesus came from above, and is above all, and that he himself was unworthy to loose the latchet of his shoes.

Some may suppose that though it was proper for John to give such an exalted representation of the character of Jesus Christ, yet it was unbecoming the Saviour to use such expressions of preference with regard to himself.—But did he not say, "A greater than Jonas is here"—"A greater than Solomon is here?" And why should he not also bear testimony, that he was greater than John?

As this interpretation is the most agreeable to the literal construction of the passage; so it appears to me to be the best suited to the connexion. John the Baptist and

* The word here used is not *microteros* but *elasson*; this however does not materially alter the case, because there are several adjectives, such as *agathos*, *micros*, *kacos*, which admit of various comparatives and superlatives, and *elasson* is often considered as one of the comparatives of *micros*.

Jesus Christ, are the only two characters which appear conspicuous in this chapter;—it begins with a representation of the former, and concludes with a description of the latter: Now the eleventh verse may be considered as the hinge where these two characters are brought into contact. It gradually removes the Baptist from our view, in a few succeeding verses; while it opens up the character of the Son of man, and presents him before us as the only object of our contemplation. The transition, according to the interpretation, here given, is natural and easy; but according to the common version, the introduction of the Son of man, in the nineteenth verse, is quite unexpected. If the text relates to Jesus and John, the two branches of the comparison bear a regular proportion towards each other; but if it relates to christians and John, while the lesser branch of the comparison extends and flourishes through nearly half the chapter, the greater branch is cut off close to the trunk and nothing more of it is ever seen or heard of afterwards.

According to the view which I have given of this text, it appears to be much more important and interesting, than according to the common interpretation. It greatly concerns us to be informed of the grandeur and excellency of our Saviour's character, that he was greater than John and all other persons who have ever been born of women; because such information is requisite to the production and establishment of our faith in him, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world. But to be taught that the least of us, is greater than all those, whose names have been handed down with veneration by the inspired penmen, can scarcely answer any other purpose than to cherish a pharisaic temper, of "trusting in ourselves and despising others."

I shall only mention and endeavour to obviate one objection. It has been said that the comparative form of expression, "he that is *less* in the kingdom of heaven," implies that John the Baptist was actually in the kingdom of heaven—was a member of the gospel church; which was not the case. To this it may be replied, 1. That as the objection arises entirely from the use of the comparative degree, it applies with as much force to the original expression as to the translation which I have given. 2. In approved writers of all countries and languages, similar anomalies of expression may be found. Thus

Adam the goodliest man, of men since born,
His sons ; the fairest of her daughters, Eve.

MILTON.

But, 3. I am not sure John the Baptist was not in the kingdom of heaven. The verses which immediately succeed the text imply that he and his followers had stormed and taken possession of this city. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

With a sincere desire to illustrate a text, which I apprehend has been generally misrepresented, I have drawn up these remarks. If they are of any use to illustrate an obscure passage, or afford any satisfaction to the readers of the Religious Instructor, the writer will reckon himself sufficiently compensated for the trouble of preparing them.

M.



On the present version of the Scriptures.

We often meet with criticisms on the English translation of the sacred writings, which is in common use.—Many instances of erroneous translation are attempted to be pointed out ; and some preachers often take the liberty from the pulpit to tell their hearers—"This is a wrong translation. Such a word in the original means quite another thing." That the version might be improved, and that the translators may have made some slight mistakes can hardly be denied by any who have carefully examined the subject.

But it is granted by the ablest critics, and particularly by the learned Kennicot, in his dissertations on the Hebrew bible, that there is no error to be found in our translation, that affects any point of doctrine or practice. And surely in attempting any correction, the greatest caution should be used. People ought not to be too frequently told, that they have had an erroneous translation of the word of God, lest they should have their faith shaken and begin to lose their reverence for the whole.

If there were any material errors, could we believe that so many thousands of pious and learned men would take such pains as they are now taking, to have the Bible reprint-

ed just as it is, and to spread it far and wide among the nations?

We were pleased to find some excellent observations on this subject, in the *Panoplist*, a magazine published in Boston, part of which we here present to our readers.

“The established version prefers great and various claims to our respect. The history of the manner in which it was prepared, stamps on it no light value and authority. It was the production of the collected learning of the age; an age, by the bye, far superior in weight of biblical erudition to our own. Numbers of the most eminent men were employed upon it for upwards of three years. Portions of the work were assigned to different societies of these, and afterwards submitted to the careful revision and correction of the rest. Persons were invited from all parts of the kingdom to communicate the result of their critical labours.

Advantage was taken, not only of all preceding English versions, but also of all the foreign, ancient and modern. Surely a work, which has proceeded from so much various erudition, employed with such anxious care, has every *a priori* claim to be valued and esteemed.

And its general intrinsic excellence well corresponds with what might be expected from this account of its preparation. It is unrivalled as a faithful translation, conveying not merely the meaning of the sacred writers, but their very style, manner, and expression. It admirably combines dignity with plainness. It addresses itself to every understanding by its general perspicuity and clearness. Without the slightest attempt at assuming a forced elevation by swelling or affected words, it never sinks into a degree of meanness which degrades the subject. We think that, in one respect, it has even improved since its first appearance. Many words and turns of expression have become obsolete, just in that degree which is desirable; that is, have somewhat receded from vulgar use, without ceasing to be fully intelligible. Thus the Scriptures have acquired a language more peculiarly their own; all approaches to colloquial familiarity have been destroyed, and much has been gained in gravity, while nothing has been lost in perspicuity.

Another point should be well considered in any question of altering the established version; our ears have become habituated to the present language, as the language of Scripture. We have known, and heard, and repeated it, as

such, from our childhood. It is the garb in which we have always seen the word of God arrayed, and which we therefore deem most appropriate and becoming. The very words and phrases have now become associated with our feelings of piety, and acquired in our ideas, a degree of sanctity and solemnity, to which no other form or combination of forms, can hope to attain. Add to this, that many well educated persons would feel their prejudices violated by a change, and require some exertion of their reason to reconcile themselves to it, while a very serious alarm might spread among the vulgar and illiterate from what, perhaps, would appear to them an impious attempt at altering the word of God. No one will urge this as a bar to any alteration under any circumstance; it behoves every considerate person, however, to take largely into the account the influence of these innocent prejudices and associations.

In mentioning the general excellencies of our established version, we meant not to disallow some partial imperfections. Grammatical errors have been pointed out; passages too in which the meaning of the original is not quite correctly rendered, in which the sense of words has been changed, or in which the expression is somewhat harsh, or vulgar. Ambiguities have likewise been noticed, but we must observe, that often where the phrase is ambiguous in strictness, no doubt arises in point of fact. Dr. Symonds cites, "perhaps, the strongest instance of wrong translation." Luke xxiii. 32; "There were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death:" now this is evidently wrong, as implying, in grammatical accuracy, that our Saviour was a malefactor, still we may safely affirm that no one ever rose from reading the passage with the impression that the Evangelist had so called him.

But, in preparing a new authorized version, who should be our guides? How could we agree in the persons to be employed, and how would they agree in their mode of proceeding? Have not the most learned critics differed widely in opinion? Would it not be probable that we should find more persons dissatisfied with any new translation we could make, than with the present? Amongst the attempts that have been hazarded, strange specimens are to be found.—Purver translates John xviii. 12, "So the *regiment*, the *colonel*, and the officers, took Jesus and bound him."—Waterland, instead of (Acts, xix. 38.) "the law is open, and there are deputies," proposes, "it is *term-time*, and the

judges are sitting." Harwood, at Luke, xiii, 6, says "a gentleman had planted a fig tree." And Wakefield translates James, i. 17, "the father of lights, with whom is *no parallax nor tropical shadow!*" Campbell, at Matt. iv. 15, has "the *canton* of Zebulon," for "the land of Zebulon." Again: in the miracle of the loaves (Matt. xvii. 24.) "How many *maunds* ye filled," where in a note, a maund is said to mean a hand basket. Also, in the transfiguration, (Matt. xvii. 4.) "Let us make here three *booths*," for "tabernacles." In Newcome's translation we dislike "mantle" for "cloak;" and "Who art thou, *Sir*," (Acts, ix. 5.) for "Who art thou, Lord." Thus the many expressions which we find in different translators, too modern, too familiar, too technical, too low, or too refined, make us the more sensible of the purity, simplicity, and general propriety of our established version.

"The question is not," says Dr. Hey, "whether new translators are likely to render some parts better than they were before; but whether, *upon the whole*, they are likely to produce a better translation." Perhaps it might be practicable to introduce a few corrections into our present version, without making any general alteration; but we are decidedly of opinion, that viewing the question in all its bearings, there exists no necessity for a new version, and that the evil of attempting it would greatly overbalance any proposed advantage."

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

BRIEF NARRATIVE

OF THE

BAPTIST MISSION.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 194.)

Four other Missionaries sent out, and the seat of the mission removed to Serampore.

As repeated requests had been made for more missionaries, and particularly for one who should understand the printing business, the committee paid every possible attention to this object. In the spring of 1799, they were enabled to send

out four men and four women ; namely Mr. and Mrs. Marshman, Mr. and Mrs. Grant, Mr. and Mrs. Brunsdon, Mr. William Ward, and Miss Tidd. Mr. Ward understood the printing business, and Mr. and Mrs. Marshman had kept a school.

The instructions given them were, among other things, to "beware, both from a principle of conscience and from a regard to their own interest, and that of the mission, of intermeddling with any political concerns—to be obedient to the laws in all civil affairs—to respect magistrates, both supreme and subordinate, and teach the same things to others—in fine, to apply themselves wholly to the all-important concerns of that evangelical service to which they had so solemnly dedicated themselves. Moreover, that "however gross might be the idolatries, and heathenish superstitions that might fall under their notice, they should sedulously avoid all rudeness, insult, or interruption, during the observance of such superstitions, observing no methods but those of Christ and his apostles, namely, the persevering use of scripture, reason, prayer, meekness, and love."

Our brethren embarked on board the *Criterion*, commanded by Captain Wickes, on May 25th 1799 ; and after an agreeable voyage, arrived at the Danish settlement of Serampore on Oct. 13, of the same year. From thence they wrote to Mr. Carey and waited his answer.

On Lord's day Oct. 27. they had public worship, and the Danish Governor (Col. Bie) with several other gentlemen attended.—The same day Mr. Grant was taken ill of a cold, attended with a kind of stupor ; and the following Thursday died ! The Governor, his family, and a number of Europeans attended the funeral.

On Nov. 9. Mr. Fountain arrived from Mudnabatty, and was married to Miss Tidd ; and on the 14th. he and Mr. Ward set off to visit Mr. Carey at that place.

Circumstances at this time were difficult, and delicate. Mr. Carey had made all the interest he could, that the four missionaries, and their wives, might be permitted to proceed and settle in the neighbourhood of Malda, but without effect. As they could not come to him, the only alternative was, whether he should go to them, or whether they should labour separately. The decision of this question was the object of Mr. Ward's journey.

In respect of Mudnabatty, the factory at that place had, owing to the failure of the crops, been given up ; and Mr. Carey, with a view to provide for the mission, had

taken a small place at Kidderpore, about twelve miles distant, where he intended to carry on a little business, and to erect some dwellings for the other missionaries. The relinquishing of this undertaking would be a loss of 500l. They had formed a church—God had given them some Europeans for their hire—a degree of light had been diffused among the natives—a school was established*—the state of things at Dinagepore was promising—the Society would be burdened with new expenses, &c. &c. On the other hand, Mr. Carey's engagements at Mudnabatty were within a few weeks of terminating—at Serampore they would meet with protection and accommodation—the great ends of the mission, particularly the printing of the scriptures, were likely to be answered in that situation rather than in the other—the country was more populous—All things considered, Mr. Carey determined to remove. It was not a light matter to him; but a necessity seemed to be laid upon him. On January 10, 1800, he arrived at Serampore; and the next day was introduced to the governor who received him in a very friendly manner.

The first object of attention was to settle a plan of family government. All the missionaries were to preach and pray in turn; one to superintend the affairs of the family for a month, and then another; Mr. Carey was appointed treasurer, and keeper of the medicine chest; Mr. Fountain librarian; Saturday evening was devoted to adjusting any differences which might arise during the week, pledging themselves to love one another; finally, it was resolved that no one should engage in any private trade; but that whatever was done by any member of the family, should be done for the benefit of the mission.

The rent of the lodgings which they at present occupied was very high. They therefore purchased a house, by the river side, with a pretty large piece of ground. It had various accommodations, but the price alarmed them; yet the rent in four years would have amounted to the purchase.

Mr. Carey having nearly finished the translation of the Old and New Testament into Bengalee; having also obtained a press, and agreed with a letter-founder at Calcutta for types, all things were now in readiness for printing.—Accordingly, the press being set up, under the direction of

* This however must have been given up on removing to Kidderpore, equally as to Serampore.

Mr. Ward, they proceeded to advertise for subscribers to the Bengalee Bible. And as it was necessary for their support to attend to printing in general, and to open a school to be superintended by Mr. and Mrs. Marshman, each was included in the advertisement. As an encouragement at the out-set, they were promised the government printing, and the teaching of the governor's children.—Some inquiry was made by the governor-general, respecting the press; but on being informed that (official papers for the Danish government excepted), its operations were confined to the printing of the scriptures, and religious tracts; and that the missionaries made it an invariable rule to print nothing of a political nature, he was satisfied.

Progress of the Mission at Serampore from 1800 to 1807, containing the principal events under each year successively.

1800. As soon as the missionaries were settled at Serampore, those who had acquired the language began preaching the gospel both in the town and neighbourhood. The first sheet of the Bengalee New Testament was struck off May 16. They printed 2000 copies, besides five hundred of the gospel by Matthew, for immediate distribution. Early in June they opened a Bengalee school, in which the children of those natives who chose to send them, were taught gratis; and by the 20th of July there were forty scholars. A native of the name of *Gokool*, residing at Serampore, appeared to be much affected with what he heard and saw. Early in August Mr. Ward speaks of having had Mr. Carey's two eldest sons in his room for religious conversation and instruction; and says, "they wept, read, prayed, and asked questions." "All our brethren," says Mr. Carey about the same time, "have lately been more than usually solicitous for the spread of the gospel."

Mr. Fountain had been visited by a severe dysentery, which laid him aside for several weeks. He had so far recovered, however, as to set off with Mrs. Fountain on a journey up the country, and on July 26th reached Dinagapore. By letters which he wrote to his brethren, it appeared that he was nearly recovered; but the disorder returned, and on August 20th, at the house of Mr. Fernandez he died. All was done for him that medical skill and chris-

tian kindness could do ; but all was ineffectual. He was resigned and happy.

In October, Mr. Marshman and Mr. Ward began to preach to the natives ; and Felix Carey going out with the latter, addressed them in a striking, simple and evangelical strain.

Soon after this an afflicted lady came up the river from Calcutt a. She intended to have gone farther, but feeling herself unable, stopped at Serampore. Having taken lodgings at the hotel, she inquired for an English prayer-book. As no such article could be had at the hotel, her desire was communicated to the missionaries. But neither could they furnish her with the article she wanted. Mr. Marshman, however, wrote her a friendly note, and accompanied it with two other books, pointing out the way to everlasting life. The lady came next morning to the mission-house, apparently in great distress of mind, and inquiring what she must do ? She requested permission to stop during family worship. The hymn sung on that occasion was, " Come ye sinners, poor and wretched." She was greatly affected, and asked leave to attend with them every day during her continuance at Serampore. After this she was desirous of hearing more about the way of salvation, and Mr. Marshman discoursed on the atonement as the ground of acceptance with God, read the agony in the garden, the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and the third chapter of the Romans, while she with the greatest eagerness drank in the doctrine of the cross. In a short time she returned to Calcutta, and died ; and they had every reason to hope, in the faith of Christ.

After the lady's decease Mr. Marshman saw her husband, from whose account of her last end his hopes were strengthened. The event also appeared to have made a considerable impression on his mind. He proved to be conversant with the bible, and yet totally ignorant of the way of salvation. He was quite astonished at what was stated to him from Rom. iii. 23—28. After a long and serious conversation, nearly at midnight, they both kneeled down, and prayed in succession. The gentleman's name was Rolt. He was afterwards baptized, and married for his second wife Mr. Brunsdon's widow.

Mr. Thomas, who was preaching in *Bheerboom*, about the end of October paid a visit at Serampore, and brought with him a Hindoo, whose name was *Fakira*, of whom he entertained great hopes. *Fakira* of his own accord proposed to be baptized, and all were satisfied with his profession ;

but before the time, he left Serampore, and went amongst his relatives, with a view, as he said, first to fetch his child. Whether his resolution failed him, or whether he was forcibly detained by his relations, the missionaries heard no more of him.

During this visit, Mr. Thomas's conversations and prayers were observed to be more than usually impressive. He himself says, in his journal of Oct. 12. "I longed for the out-pouring of God's Spirit, and did ask for it believingly for an hour or more together. At midnight I was enabled to pour out strong cries and supplications to God." Speaking also of the other missionaries, he says, "The holy unction appears on them all, especially of late." A weekly prayer-meeting was set up at Mr. Thomas's desire, for the success of the mission; and what was observed of Mr. Carey, seems to have been common to them all, that *the death of Christ was more and more the theme of their preaching.*

Early in November many repaired to the mission-house for the gospel by Matthew, which was given to all who desired it. On the 25th, Mr. Thomas was called to attend a man whose arm was dislocated. After the operation, he talked to him very impressively concerning his salvation. The name of the man was *Kristno*. He wept like a child, and even sobbed while Mr. Thomas talked to him. *Gokool*, of whom mention has been made before, lived near him, and was present at the time. Two days after this *Kristno* wanted to come to the mission-house for instruction; for he said, they had not only cured his arm, but brought him the news of salvation. He and *Gokool* came together and heard the word. The consequence was, *Gokool's* wife and family deserted him; but those of *Kristno* were like minded with himself. The family of the latter was then visited. The women appeared to have learned more of the gospel than was expected; and after having heard it more particularly explained, they declared for Christ.

On the 22d of December, *Gokool* and *Kristno* came and ate publicly with the missionaries, by which act they threw away their cast. The servants, and as many as witnessed it, were astonished, as they had all said, No one would lose cast for the gospel; nor were the missionaries much short of being so. They saw that day what they had been waiting and hoping for many years, and concerning which they had met with so many disappointments.

This insurmountable difficulty, as it had been considered, seemed now to give way without any effort on the part of the missionaries. "God," as Mr. Marshman observed, "has done it with perfect ease. Thus the door of faith is opened to the Gentiles; who shall shut it? The chain of the cast is broken, who shall mend it?"

The same evening, *Gokool* without his family, but *Kristno* with his, came and offered themselves willingly to the church, each making a solemn profession of faith in Christ, and of obedience to his commands. Their hearts, to use the words of *Gokool*, seemed "nailed to Christ." Mr. Thomas was almost overcome with joy. At the close of the meeting they all stood up and sung, "Salvation, O the joyful sound," &c.

It was soon noised abroad that these people had lost cast; and now a time of trial drew near. The next day a great company assembled, two thousand or thereabouts, pouring out their execrations upon them. Taking them by force, they first dragged them before the Danish magistrate; but he, instead of censuring, commended them for what they had done. Being dismissed, they came a second time with *Kristno* with a new charge, accusing him of refusing to deliver up his daughter to a man who had contracted for her in marriage. The magistrate however defended *Kristno*, and assured the girl that she should not be compelled to marry the man against her consent. The governor also promised the missionaries that they should not be interrupted in baptizing.

The hubbub that had thus been raised did not shake the resolution of *Kristno*; but his family, and *Gokool*, were intimidated by it. On the 27th they sent to the mission-house, saying, "they wished to put off their baptism for a few weeks." The next day, (Lord's day the 28th) was the time appointed for baptizing. *Kristno* came forward, and with Felix Carey, was baptized in the Hoogly. A considerable number of Europeans and natives attended; many of whom appeared to be struck with the solemnity of the ordinance. "When *Kristno* came from dressing, (which here is a very short work) a German lady who was present took him by the hand and held him for some moments. She was unable to make him understand her words, but she manifestly thanked him in her heart for having renounced the worship of devils." After the Lord's supper had been celebrated, *Kristno* said he was "full of joy."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

DR. VANDER KEMP.

I seldom feel more interested in any species of religious intelligence, than in those accounts given by Missionaries among the heathens, in which the words and actions of new converts to Christianity, are related with minuteness and simplicity. Sometimes the frankness, the artlessness, and the faith and piety of these trophies of the cross, are so exhibited as to excite a multitude of tender feelings.

Most of our readers, I doubt not, have experienced a great variation, at different times, in their susceptibility of pathetic impressions. Sometimes they can read Judah's affecting speech before Joseph, for instance, or David's most impassioned lamentation over his son Absalom, without remarkably strong emotions; though never without interest: while, at other times, these passages would dissolve them in tears, and fill their hearts with such irresistible sympathy as cannot be described.

I was in a state of mind similar to this, when I lately came across that part of the Report of the London Missionary Society, where Dr. Vander Kemp is describing the death of a pious Hottentot woman. When I came to the last words, "Now I will go to my God," I could contain myself no longer; but was compelled to yield to a train of reflections overpowering in themselves, and calculated, I trust, to fix deep in my heart a regard for the souls of the heathen.

"Happy man!" I could hardly help saying to myself, "here thou receivest an abundant recompense for thy sacrifices, and thy toils. Well didst thou leave the land of thy fathers, and the delights of literary and social intercourse, and abandon the habits formed during a life of fifty years in a civilized country. Well didst thou devote thyself, in the decline of thy years, to the labours of Missionary service, the perils of an African wilderness, and the instruction of those, who have heretofore been esteemed the most stupid and debased of barbarians. With what unutterable emotions must thou have seen this woman depart in peace! and after exhibiting satisfactory evidences of piety, profess herself going to God, with respect to whose existence, holiness, and grace, thou hadst been the instrument of enlightening her soul! Wordly conquests are too despicable to be named with those which thou hast achieved. Pursue thy heavenly course. Prepare thyself for the rewards of those *who turn many to righteousness*. And

may the example and the success of thy labours excite multitudes to engage in the noble employment of preaching the gospel to the heathen."

PH. E.

Pam.

PRAYING SOCIETIES.

We present our readers with the following extract from the printed narrative of the state of religion within the bounds of the General Assembly, May 1810.

"The Assembly hail it as an auspicious omen, that upon many of his people and churches, God has poured out a Spirit of grace and supplication. We rejoice in being able to say, that *praying societies* have considerably increased in the last twelve months. Let those who have been favoured with the effusions of the Holy Spirit, persevere with increasing diligence, in the use of those means which it has pleased God to bless; and let those who are still in a state of languor and coldness, remember that it is only in the diligent use of the means appointed by God, that they can expect to obtain his blessing. Let the friends of Jesus, throughout our land, united in one purpose and animated by one spirit, rise to more vigorous exertions for the promotion of vital piety."

We are happy to learn that in accordance with the above, praying societies are beginning of late to be established in many places within the bounds of the General Assembly. The following is an extract of a letter to one of the Editors from the Rev. Nathan Grier, dated Brandywine, Chester county, Feb. 5th 1811. "I send you the following transcript of a minute of the Presbytery of New-castle, made at their meeting in June last. 'The revivals of religion with which the Presbyterian church has lately been favoured, in different parts of our country, have generally been preceded by meetings for social and importunate prayer. Indeed, in all ages of the world, the Lord has manifested himself to be a prayer-hearing God. The Presbytery of New-castle, fully apprized, that it is their indispensable duty to endeavour to excite all the people under their pastoral care, to frequent and fervent prayer, personal, family and social; do most affectionately recommend to them as follows: 1st, That in every congregation, whether vacant or supplied with a pastor, one week-day in every month be set apart for special prayer to God, for the effusions of his Spirit upon their families and churches; and for other religious exercises. And as the principal design of these meetings is to beseech the Great Head of the church to pour out abundantly the convincing, converting, and quickening influences of his Spirit, all the religious exercises attended to at these meetings, shall have a direct bearing on that subject.

2dly, That congregations contiguous to each other, set apart different days for the above purpose, that the clergymen and members of different churches may unite together, and assist each other in the various religious exercises.

3dly, That when no clergyman is present, the exercises be conducted by the ruling elders, or such private christians, as can be prevailed upon to assist them. And that the exercises be praying, singing, and reading some sermon, or other religious tract suited to the occasion.'

Copies of the above have been transmitted to our congregations, and I believe the result is not unpromising. Motives to prompt us to spiritual diligence, press around us from every quarter. The value of Christ's blood by which we have been redeemed, the animating promises, the tremendous threatenings, the shortness of life, the worth of souls, the

solemnities of a dying bed, the glories which await the faithful, the torments of the damned, and the eternity which will very shortly be stamped on our destiny; are all motives inciting us to work, while it is called to day.

Christ, the captain of our salvation, has left us an example in what manner we are to prosecute our business, as ministers of the gospel. How assiduously did he preach and pray, and go about doing good! The example of his servant Paul is also calculated powerfully to impel us to watch, to pray, to preach. His animating declarations are enough to inspirit a coward. Should a minister, who has already stood before the judgment seat of Christ, and had a view of heaven and hell, be sent back to our world to preach a few sermons—Oh in what manner would he discharge his embassy! How would he preach! How would he pray! How would he live! But—what more could he do than Paul did? He “ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.” Whom did he warn? *Every man*, who came within the sound of his voice. *When* did he warn them? *Night and day*. *In what manner* did he warn them? With *tears* of affection. O my soul! contemplate the apostle Paul, warning his hearers, night and day, with tears; nay, the Saviour himself weeping over impenitent sinners and blush at thy insensibility. When God shall pour out universally upon his children, a spirit of grace and supplication, then shall the mountains and the hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands.”

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR.

BEAUTIFUL AND IMPRESSIVE HYMN,

Worthy of being learnt, by, and impressed on every heart.

The following lines, on the presence and Providence of God, are considered as very beautiful.

They are followed by an attempt to express the same sentiments in a more poetic dress.

“Child of Reason, whence comest thou!—What has thine eye observed, and whither have thy feet been wandering?”

“I have been wandering along the meadows, in thick grass. The cattle were feeding about me, or reposing in the cool shade: the corn sprung up in the furrows; the poppy and the hare-bell grew among the wheat; the fields were white with summer, and glowing with beauty.”

“Didst thou see nothing more? Didst thou observe nothing beside? Return again, Child of Reason, for there are greater things than these. God was amongst the fields,

and didst thou not perceive him? His beauty was upon the meadows; his smile enlivened the sun-shine?"

"I have walked through the thick forest; the wind whispered among the trees; the brook fell from the rock with a pleasant murmur; the squirrel leaped from bough to bough; and the birds sung to each other amongst the branches."

"Didst thou hear nothing but the murmur of the brook? No whispers, but the whispers of the wind? Return again, Child of Reason, for there are greater things than these. God was among the trees; his voice sounded in the murmur of the water; his music warbled in the shade; and didst thou not attend?"

"I saw the moon rising behind the trees; it was like the lamp of gold. The stars, one after another appeared in the clear firmament. Presently I saw black clouds arise, and roll towards the south; the lightning streamed in thick flashes over the sky; the thunder growled at a distance; it came nearer, and I felt afraid, for it was loud and terrible."

"Did thy heart feel no terror, but of the thunder bolt? Was there nothing bright and terrible, but the lightning? Return again, O Child of Reason, for there are greater things than these. God was in the storm, and didst thou not perceive him? His terrors were abroad, and did not thy heart acknowledge him?"

"God is in every place; he speaks in every sound we hear; he is in all that our eyes behold. Nothing, O Child of Reason, is without God. Let God, then, be in all our thoughts."

Child of Reason, whither hast thou stray'd,—
What hast thou heard, and what thine eye survey'd?

"Plains widely spread and deck'd with green,
And smiling meadows I have seen;
And as by pleasant streams I stray'd,
Flocks sought the grass, or cooling shade.
The fields were white with ripening grain,
And blooming flowers adorn'd the plain."

And didst thou nothing more observe or see?
Was nothing more sublime perceiv'd by thee?
Did no good Being make all these his care?
Come, Child of Reason, own that God was there;

He decks with beauty all the flowery race :
He is the sun, enliv'ning nature's face.

" I walk'd the shady forest thro' ;
Grand scenes and prospects met my view ;
The falling brook sweet music made,
The gentle breezes whisp'ring play'd ;
The winged songsters charm'd the ear ;
O! how delightful 'twas to hear !"

And didst thou nothing but the murmur hear?
Did nought but rural sounds delight the ear?
Return again, O Child of Reason—learn,
Sublimar things than these thou may'st discern.
It was the voice of God, when breezes play'd,
It was his music warbled in the shade.
Didst thou not hear the voice of nature call,—
" 'Tis God, who speaks, and acts, and moves in all."

" I saw the moon in glory rise,
A golden lamp in eastern skies ;
Around the twinkling stars appear,
To deck the heav'n serene and clear.
But soon dark clouds obscure the pole,
Soon lightnings flash, and thunders roll.
I see the threat'ning tempest near :
I stand amaz'd, I start with fear !"

And didst thou feel no fear but the surprize
Which may from warring elements arise?
Can fires electric shake thy trembling heart,
And not his power, who sends the lightning's dart?
O Child of Reason, listen, and be taught.
Let higher objects claim thy wondering thought.
When the storm rag'd, the God of power was there ;
His various works his attributes declare :
In grateful hymns the God of nature bless,
Whose living energy his laws confess.

God's presence is in every place,
He sees all things thro' boundless space ;
He speaks in every sound we hear,
His providence is always near.

O Child of Reason, learn to know,
He governs all things here below ;

He claims our fear,—he claims our love ;
His throne is heaven,—he reigns above.

P.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

LINES OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF A BELOVED AND
PIOUS FRIEND. *Carlisle.*

Rev. vii. 15, 16. *They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple ; and he who sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat : for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them by living fountains of water ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

O happy friend ! to heav'n remov'd,
To see the Saviour whom you lov'd :—
The storms of life, you fear no more,
Since you have reach'd the heav'nly shore.
Safe in the hav'n of promis'd rest,
How joyful ! how supremely blest !

While here you often wept,—and pray'd—
You look'd to heav'n, and sigh'd, and said,—
' When shall I reach the realms of peace !
When shall my painful conflict cease !
When shall the world no more prevail,
Nor its temptations me assail !
When shall the roaring lion cease,
To vex my soul and break my peace !
And when shall this poor heart no more
Its sad deceitfulness deplore !
When shall I breathe my latest sigh, }
And from this feeble mansion fly, }
By guardian angels borne on high ! }

Thus often did you mourning go,
While traversing this vale of wo.
Thus oft to heaven address'd your prayer,
On wings of faith ascending there.

And now you've reached the blest abode,
 Where dwells your Saviour and your God.
 In the delightful holy place,
 You see your JESUS face to face ;
 That sacred person you behold,
 Whose glories never can be told.
 You hear his gracious lips declare,
 That one of his redeem'd you are,—
 Purchas'd by blood, on Calvary shed,
 And by his arm to victory led.
 Kindly, with heavenly fruits he feeds,
 And you by living waters leads.
 He frees you from each foe and fear,
 And from the eye wipes every tear.
 O ! those are heav'nly words indeed,
 Which from his gracious lips proceed !
 Does he his boundless love reveal ?
 What nameless transports then you feel !
 With rapture you're constrain'd to cry—
 While you behold the LORD on high,
 With looks of love smiling upon
 The myriads that surround his throne,—

' And is that JESUS—is it He—
 The same who bled and died for me !
 Are those the hands, the feet, the side,—
 Which streams of precious blood supplied,
 To wash away sin's deepest stain,
 And make our garments white again !
 O ! join with me ye ransom'd throng,
 To notes divine attune the song ;
 Salvation to the Lord be given,—
 SALVATION, is the song of heaven :
 Salvation unto Him ascribe,
 Ye say'd,—of every tongue and tribe :
 And let the LAMB be ever prais'd,
 Who from the deeps of wo has rais'd
 The myriads that surround the throne ;—
 AND OF THIS NUMBER MADE ME ONE.'